

OCYDROMUS SYLVESTRIS, *Sclater*. The Wood-hen.

“*Wood-hen*.” Inhabitants of Lord Howe Island.

This bird is found breeding in the most rugged and inaccessible portions of the Island, such as the Erskine Valley, between Mount Ledgbird and Mount Gower. Here the rough character of the country, consisting of huge boulders of granite almost hidden in a dense and luxuriant mass of sub-tropical vegetation, affords it a secure retreat. The nest in question, was found last October at the head of the Erskine Valley, and consisted merely of a depression in a thick débris of fallen leaves, under the shelter of a low bush. The eggs four in number vary in shape from ovals to lengthened ovals, being slightly pointed at one end, and are of a dull white, with minute dots and large irregular shaped markings of light chestnut-red more or less scattered over the surface of the shell, obsolete markings of the same colour predominating towards the larger end, they are not unlike very large specimens of *Hypotenidia philippensis* (*Rallus pectoralis*), but the markings are paler and not so well defined. Length (A) 1.9 x 1.32 inch; (B) 1.88 x 1.36 inch; (C) 1.95 x 1.3 inch; (D) 2 inches x 1.32 inch. Mr. Leely remarks that this is the first time that any of the present inhabitants of the Island have seen the eggs of the Wood-hen, or had heard of them being taken.* Plate i., fig. 3.

NOTES ON THE NIDIFICATION OF *HETEROMYIAS CINEREIFRONS* AND *ORTHONYX SPALDINGI*, RAMSAY, FROM THE CAIRNS DISTRICT, NORTH-EASTERN QUEENSLAND; AND ON *STERNULA SINENSIS*, GMELIN, FROM THE TWEED RIVER, NEW SOUTH WALES.

By A. J. NORTH.

HETEROMYIAS CINEREIFRONS, *Ramsay*. Ashy-fronted Flycatcher.

“*Win-dan*.” Aborigines of Cairns District.

During September and October of 1889, several nests of this species were obtained by Messrs. Cairn and Grant, in the scrubs of the Herberton tableland, in every instance they were found in the “lawyer vines” (a species of *Calamus*), about four or

* P.L.S., N.S.W., 2nd Ser., Vol. iv., Dec., 1889.

five feet from the ground, several of these nests now before me have been built between the forked stems, or where several vines cross each other, in other instances they have been placed at the base of leaves on the thin horizontal stems, to which the nest is attached. The outside of the nest is formed of thin twigs, wiry rootlets, skeletons of leaves, and the fibre of the "lawyer vine," the inside which is cup-shaped, being neatly lined with finer materials, while the exterior portion of the nest is ornamented with mosses and lichens, which gives it a pleasing appearance. Exterior diameter 4·5 inches, depth 4 inches, internal diameter 2·75 inches, depth 1·1 inch. The eggs are two in number for a sitting, and closely resemble in shape and colour large specimens of *Artamus superciliosus*, being of a dull buffy-white ground colour, thickly covered, especially towards the larger end with clouded markings of umber-brown, in some instances they are more clearly defined and boldly blotched, and have markings of deep bluish-grey appearing as if beneath the surface of the shell. A set taken on the 18th September measures as follows :—Length (A) 1·05 x 0·75 inch ; (B) 1·07 x 0·77 inch.* Plate i., fig. 4.

ORTHONYX SPALDINGI, *Ramsay*. Spalding's Orthonyx.

"*Chowchilla*." Aborigines of Cairns District.

This species has recently been met with rather freely dispersed through the dense brushes of the coastal range, chiefly in the neighbourhood of the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers, in North-Eastern Queensland. Mr. Cairn, who found several nests of this species, states they are usually built in the tangled roots of "lawyer vines," but not unfrequently on the top of the elk's-horn fern, as high as twelve feet from the ground. The nest is a large bulky dome-shaped structure with an entrance on one side, it is composed of twigs, roots and mosses, chiefly a species of *Hypnum*, so loosely put together that it will not bear removal. Unlike its southern ally *O. spinicaudus*, it appears that only one egg is laid for a sitting. A nest found near "Boar Pocket," on the 20th June last, contained but one egg in an advanced state of incubation, others were found as late as the middle of August. The breeding season this year (1889) would appear to be from May till the end of September, young birds being procured in June, but as in other parts of Australia the breeding season of birds is greatly influenced by the rains. The eggs, which are pure white, vary from elongated to swollen ovals, some being equal in size at each end. Two average sized specimens measure :—(A) 1·45 x 1 inch ; (B) 1·38 x 1·1 inch.* Plate i., fig. 2.

*P.L.S., N.S.W., 2nd Ser., Vol. iv., Dec., 1889.

STERNULA SINENSIS, *Gmelin*. (S. PLACENS, *Gould*.) Chinese Tern,
White-shafted Ternlet, &c.

This bird was found breeding by Messrs. Grime & Yardley, during a visit to the Tweed River Heads on the 7th October, 1889. The eggs two in number for a sitting were laid in a slight depression in the sand, all the eggs taken at that time being in an advanced stage of incubation ; in form they vary from true ovals to swollen ovals, terminating somewhat abruptly at one end, some of them being of a stone-grey ground colour, others a light coffee-brown, with rounded spots and irregular shaped penumbral blotches of umber-brown and dark slaty-grey, the latter colour in some instances predominating and appearing as if beneath the surface of the shell. Four specimens measure as follows :—(A) 1·28 x 0·95 inch ; (B) 1·27 x 0·94 inch ; (C) 1·18 x 0·95 inch ; (D) 1·25 x 0·9 inch. Skins of the parent birds were obtained and forwarded with the eggs for identification.* Plate i., fig. 1.

* P.L.S., N.S.W., 2nd Ser., Vol. iv., Dec., 1889.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I.

- Fig. 1. *Sternula sinensis*, Gmelin.
,, 2. *Orthonyx spaldingi*, Ramsay.
,, 3. *Ocydromus sylvestris*, Selater.
,, 4. *Heteromyias cinereifrons*, Ramsay.
,, 5. *Merula vinitincta*, Gould.

The figures are all of the natural size.